

**From:** Mark Walsh  
**To:** Microsoft ATR  
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I am a consumer or in other words; the supposed reason the antitrust law was put in place. Reading about the alternative proposals from other "voices" in the industry I see very little to protect me and a whole lot about how to improve the industry position of Microsoft's competitors. If you really want to see a complete monopoly, try to buy a piece of hardware compatible with an Apple computer from someone besides Apple; you can't. Some other companies have tried to manufacture Apple compatible hardware only to fall victim to Apple's anticompetitive practices.

The fog caused by political contributions of many of Microsoft's competitors (PACs) has created a feeding frenzy by state attorney generals who saw their state treasuries grow from tobacco settlements. Expecting to get the same from Microsoft, a company who never killed anyone and never mislead consumers, proves to us all that companies can use the legal system to improve their market position rather than spending the money on research and development to give me, the consumer, a better product. I believe many of Microsoft's competitors are and will be following that same business practices they do not want Microsoft to be able to use. I do not believe protecting the consumer had much to do with the original action and in many ways, if Microsoft were to cease providing their products many consumers would suffer.

Check out what company provides the most help and aid to enable the handicapped to use computers. I know which company that is. My father was sightless (that's blind to all of you aren't familiar with the term), but was able to use a computer thanks to the help provided unselfishly by Microsoft. When he had problems getting his voice synthesizer to work, his calls to Microsoft not only were handled with the utmost importance, but on more than one occasion, when answers could not be given at lower levels, Mr. Gates himself handled the calls. The ability to use a computer enhanced my father's life greatly as it would anyone who is blind. I wish all of the whining technology companies spent what Microsoft spends to be sure their products can be used by the handicapped (Not a bad thing to include in a ruling, something that actually helps consumers, not just companies)..

It's not difficult to see the hidden agendas of the politicians involved with the Microsoft case. Hatch listens closely to a company named Novell (Definitely a monopoly in networking before Microsoft released NT). Many members of congress listen closely to the wants and complaints from one of their favorite investments, which is located about 30 minutes outside of Washington D.C., and is probably the biggest monopoly in history (AOL). Preservation of AOL's instant messenger

monopoly has lead them to absolutely refuse to participate in an open standard so all operating systems and browsers, not just AOL's, could talk to each other. Microsoft was one of those parties seeking an open standard and AOL refused.

The only way I can talk to my children at college using instant messenger is to install AOL software that installs other AOL software that is difficult to remove and causes non-technical computer users to sign up for AOL internet access whether they want to or not.

It is my hope that after all the whining is done, and the ulterior motives of all the parties are examined, the Justice department will see fit to rule in a way that will protect me and other consumers, not merely enhance the market position of Microsoft's competitors. I wish these companies would spend half of that money they spend harassing Microsoft on research. They would have better products and consumers like me would be the big winners. Some of the proposed "remedies" may actually hurt the consumer. It is important that companies that actually innovate and not just litigate be allowed to improve their products.

Technology can help the handicapped live better quality lives, but everyone ignores them because they can't afford to buy it. Any company that spends research money to help the handicapped, knowing full well the return is in good will, not bigger profits, should be applauded, not sued.

Like most consumers, I can't afford big political contributions to get my voice heard, but it was my understanding that's why the Justice Department is there.

Thank You,

Mark Walsh, An American Consumer

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